

The Journey Continues ...



Acting Director Craig Stenning has continued his visits throughout the State of RI meeting with agencies, staff, people receiving services, families and advocates. One of the most rewarding visits was to the Cove Center. Craig was able to meet with staff, the agency Director, June Groden, and he also talked directly with many of the individuals receiving services at Cove. Craig said he was especially impressed with the employment services that the Center has developed as well as some of the groups which he observed. After the tour, Craig was able to spend nearly an hour with staff talking about the future of DD services in general and plans for the Cove Center in particular.



Craig mentioned another important visit, this time to one of the group homes operated by West Bay Residential, Inc. He was able to talk to two family members and a number of residents as well as staff and West Bay Director, John DiMarco. Craig heard the difficult journey that many families have had to go through in order to provide a high quality of life for their loved ones. Craig talked about the need to be able to offer a full range of services and options for individuals.

Craig also visited with a program for homeless individuals at St. Joseph Hospital run by Riverwood Mental Health. MHRH has supported the development of outreach services to the homeless population who have mental health and substance abuse problems through a number of prior grants

including a shift in emphasis for our *PATH* grant and in cooperation with *Housing First*. Craig was able to meet privately with several individuals who had previously been homeless.

Another important tour was with President/CEO Mary Madden and staff from the Trudeau Center. Craig visited their workshop program and then toured several of their group homes. He was impressed with the level of service for people with very difficult needs and the related difficulty of providing these services including transportation.

Additional visits were to the NRI Annual meeting in Woonsocket; Phoenix House Leadership Awards Luncheon, the Talbot program at the Mathias building and to one of the Providence Center's supervised apartment programs in Providence that provides independent living to people with structured staff support.

Craig also spent time at a training for the *Access to Recovery Program (ATR)* for faith-based and community organizations which was attending by over 50 organizations.

The complexities of the MHRH delivery system is also demonstrated through the additional meetings that Acting Director had recently with the RI Council of Mental Health Organizations; officials from the Homestead Group, Inc; Governor's Council on Behavioral Healthcare; Attorney General's Office; Mentor, Inc.; Joseph Bevilaqua and Tom Romeo (*former MHRH Directors*); the Sherlock Center; RI Disability Law Center; RI Recovery Institute; family members from the RI Arc; Beacon Health Strategies; and staff from Justice Resources Institute (JRI), Inc.

